The Distaff Side
presents

Vienna Concerto

Prequel of *Nordiska Sonata* (1980)
from the collected volume *Nordiska Sonata* (1981)
For the first time published in 1976 in winter issue of *Ribbon Deluxe* magazine

Story & Art
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Stuff

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Nothing for three months --then mail from Vienna...
scratch scratch
Glue?
thud
It was the end of 1975 and days and days had passed without a word...
KER-PLAP
in the form of a heavy envelope was delivered to my place.
the air-accident on the 2nd floor
TRANQUILIZER PRODUCT
← Shooting Star* (the assistant's car)
← Thunderbird 1* (the hero's car)
GOO I'M CLUMSY
KERP
* post office symbol
Let me tell you about him.
I got to know him entirely by accident that one little fan of mine...
The writer of the letter was one Ikushima Rei, 17 years old.

* Probably a reference to Super Jetter
* Presumably named for the vehicle from Thunderbirds

he's been keeping a diary of his experiences...
Portrait No.1
with Mrs Mette from the boarding house
with classmates
For the last two years,
once a month.
and sending it to me...
Oh, is this Grandma? She looks in high spirits, somehow...
EEK!- LET ME SEE!-
ME NEXT!-
Music Dictionary

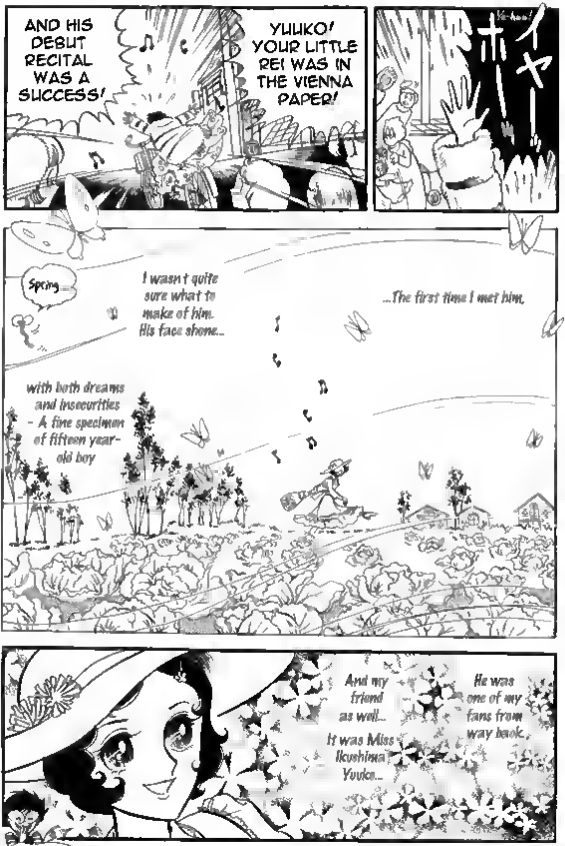
ウィーン協奏曲

Vienna Concerto

My mind's been in such a whirl over my first recital...
!
swish
Dear Miss Kai, please forgive me for not writing sooner
REY IKUSHIMA
that I just didn't get to it
だだだだーっ
PIAN PIAN PIAN
BUT BOSS! WHAT ABOUT THE DEADLINE?
IT'S REI!
EVEN IF IT WAS A VIENNA ONE IN GERMAN
HE WAS IN THE PAPER!
WAAAAH!
QUIT WHINING! WE CAN FINISH IN THREE HOURS, NO PROBLEM! I HAVE COMPLETE FAITH IN YOU!
Hmmm
Pat Pat
TRA-PRO

* Tra-Pro – "Tranquilizer Product"

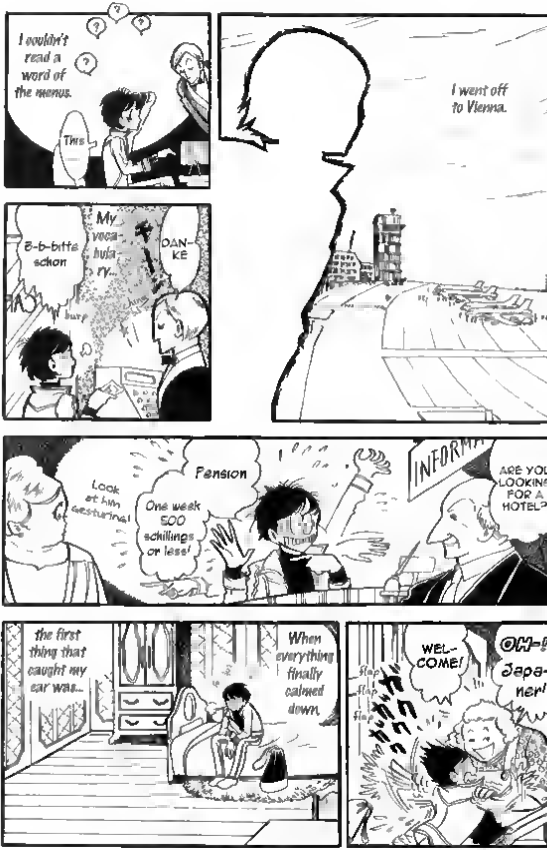
The recital was a success.
Rei! Rei! I can almost see...
your happy face now!
I can feel your flood of emotions.
In that one sentence report,
5
shop's banner kuyou

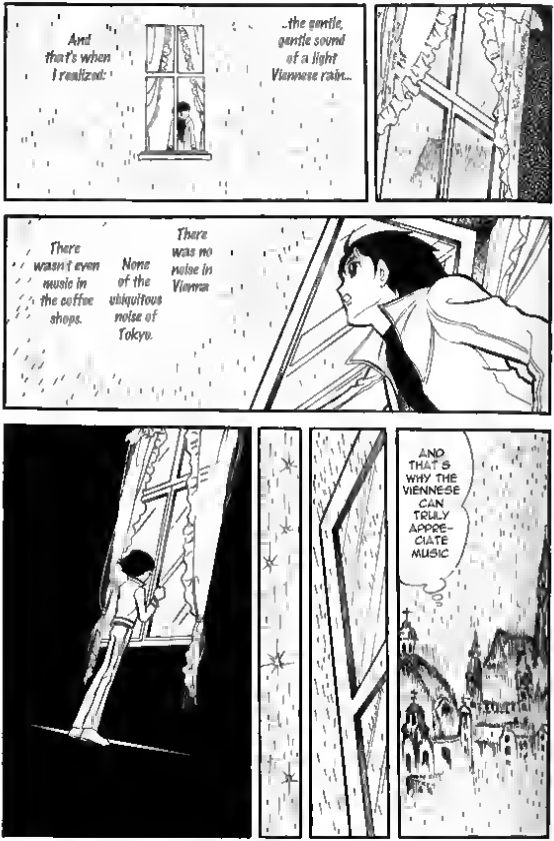

AND HIS DEBUT RECITAL WAS A SUCCESS!
YUUKO! YOUR LITTLE RE! WAS IN THE VIENNA PAPER!
イヤー
ボー
Spring...
I wasn't quite sure what to make of him. His face shone...
...The first time I met him,
with both dreams and insecurities - A fine specimen of fifteen year-old boy
And my friend as well...
It was Miss Ikushima Yuuko...
He was one of my fans from way back,
Oh, hi! Super Indecisive!

and I'd gone to a gathering of her friends from the conservatory that she'd arranged for me...
I was interested in music school back then,
YOU CAME!
THE VIENNA BOYS' CHOIR HAS REALLY DECLINED
THAT NINTH THEY ENDED WITH? GOD!
They were gossiping about the music world.
SPEAKING OF SEIJI OZAWA*
It's all Greek to me.
?
In the spring they direct...
* Seiji Ozawa: a famous Japanese conductor
YOU DO MANGA RIGHT?
Gu!
HUH? I MEAN YES. BUT...
ARE YOU MISS TAKEMIYA?
Kai was there.

HERE'S SOMEONE WITH HER OWN "LANGUAGE"
AND THEY MADE ME THINK
I GOT SOME OF YOURS FROM MY SISTER
WHA-I?
flash
WE BOTH HAVE THAT DRIVE TO EXPRESS OURSELVES
THAT MAKES US KINDRED SPIRITS, DON'T YOU THINK?
FOR ME IT'S PIANO.
FOR YOU IT'S MANGA
THAT'S YOUR LITTLE BROTHER? SO BOTH OF YOU WANT TO BE PIANISTS?
Swat Swat
Go away!
OH GOD, SORRY. HE'S ABSOLUTELY SHAMELESS
That's what I thought
Pretty bold for a fifteen year-old!
GGG

Before I know it, they started coming once a month...
He started sending me lots of fan letters...
But that's enough about his sister
Here you go it's your fan mail
Work!
Sign. From Zkushima Rei
When I left Japan two years ago I could never have imagined this.
Now that the applause and the flashbulbs have died away
I can breath a sigh of relief
How with a knapsack over my shoulder...
Miss Kei, do you remember how I was two years ago?


I couldn't read a word of the menus.
This
I went off to Vienna.
B-b-bitte schon
My vocabulary...
DANKE
burp
Look at him gesturing!
Pension
One week 500 schillings or less!
INFORMATION
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A HOTEL?
the first thing that caught my ear was...
When everything finally calmed down
WELCOME!
Oh-! Japanese!


And that's when I realized:
..the gentle, gentle sound of a light Viennese rain...
There wasn't even music in the coffee shops.
None of the ubiquitous noise of Tokyo.
There was no noise in Vienna
AND THAT'S WHY THE VIENNESE CAN TRULY APPRECIATE MUSIC

I'm in Vienna.
Dear Miss Kei,
Hey this shit's in Japanese
WTF
OH MY GOOD-NESS, REI!
One day out of the blue, I got a letter from Vienna.
FANMAIL WITH A VIENNA POSTMARK?
WHAT ON EARTH?
You're popular all over the world huh Bess
You could have bowled me over with a feather!
No way!
I decided to see just what I'm capable of while I'm still young.
...a music school in test-happy Japan.
Rather than going nuts trying to get into...
The subject of the Vienna Academy entrance exam was the Bach inventions and Beethoven.
HE DOESN'T KNOW SO MUCH AS THE 'D' IN DEUTCHE
BUT...

I'LL TAKE THEM WHEN I GET BETTER AT GERMAN
AND LECTURES?
INDIVIDUAL PIANO LESSONS CHORUS AND CHAMBER MUSIC
WHAT KIND OF LESSONS WILL YOU TAKE?
I SUPPOSE MUSICAL NOTATION IS THE SAME THE WORLD OVER, ISN'T IT
I'm all alone in Vienna, but...
just how far can my words reach...?
Are you still speaking your own personal language, Miss Kei?
That's the question I've set out to answer

HEY. HOW'S IT GOING? THE ACADEMY'S CRAZY STRICT --IT'S NOT GETTING TO YOU, IS IT?
THE TRUTH IS, I'VE GOT A THING FOR ROCK MYSELF
That's American English. Is he a yank?
Yes.
Hey! Are you Japanese?
HI THERE. THERE'S NO NEED TO LOOK SO SURPRISED IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO FIND JAPANESE PEOPLE AT THE VIENNA ACADEMY
She's Japanese!
JAZZ HISTORY IS VERY IMPORTANT YOU KNOW
NOT FOR JAZZ?

MY, HOW QUICK YOU ARE TO SAY THAT, JOHNNY CARTWRIGHT
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE MS INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT!
PERHAPS EVEN BETTER THAN THE VIENNESE
WE'RE UNBEATABLE WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNIQUE
IT'S NOT EASY TO CATCH UP
TO EUROPEANS MUSIC IS LIKE AIR
THE DEPTH OF EUROPEAN MUSIC HISTORY I MEAN
MAYBE IF YOU BOTH STUDY MORE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
Why is she so rabid about this?
What is it?
uhmm
YEAH, YOU SAID IT SHE'S SUCH A SNOB
UH WOW

I came to Europe to study
That's true.
But what difference do countries and peoples and history make to music?
NEXT!
FRANZ VON CLEMENTI
YOU MUST STUDY THE CLEANNESS OF HESSEKING AND RICHTER
NEIN!
YOUR TOUCH MUST BE EVEN!
HERE

He's certainly calm... He must be a couple of years older.
What flawless pianism!
How does he get such a gentle tone?
And yet it's so lively

Hush
Sparks
UH... UM...
thunk
thunk
Holy...
There's good and then there's that.
WHY WERE YOU TRYING TO TALK TO FRANZ?
WERE YOU ASKING HIM TO TEACH YOU HOW TO GET THAT SOUND?
NOW THAT YOU'VE HEARD IT, YOU WANT TO STEAL IT?
IT'S USELESS YOU KNOW THAT LONE WOLF NEVER GETS CLOSE TO ANYONE
MAYBE YOU SHOULD SPEND YOUR TIME MASTERING AT LEAST ONE PIECE INSTEAD?

Dear Miss Kai,
My piano was delivered today
but I've been longing for a Bosendorfer
It was a little expensive for a rental.
* Bosendorfer is famous brand of piano
It sounds so nice...!
I think Mrs. Mette from the boardinghouse likes me.
I've finally adjusted to life here.

I LIKE BLACK CAUSE IT HIDES DIRT
AND TODAY IS LAUNDRY DAY
MORE BLACK CLOTHING DO YOU EVEN OWN ANYTHING ELSE?
like her own son.
She looks after me...
medicine
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HEY THAT'S THE WIDOW FROM THE ROOM ABOVE RE'S
YOU'RE MUCH TOO NOISY! PLAYING FOR SEVEN OR EIGHT HOURS EVERY DAY!
I don't have to worry about practicing.
Everybody at the boarding-house loves music.
But I don't play after nine at night.
WELL S HAPPEN TO LIKE RE'S PLAYING
HORRI-BLE?
AN ARTIST? WITH THAT HORRIBLE SOUND?
YEAH
RE'S A BUDDING ARTIST. HE NEEDS HIS PRACTICE
School's coming along too. I can understand lectures now

has great technique but
Johnny the yank
he lacks finesse.
lunch
It's lonely being a foreign exchange student,
so we get together pretty often.
Why can't we just be friends?
Why should there be rivalry between two Japanese people?
I wish she'd just talk to me.
Hey, Rei!
But he's always so over-whelmingly cheerful
that it doesn't matter
DO YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE? I'M ABOUT TO PASS OUT!
I've gotten to know the Japanese girl in my class too.

Why is competition the only thing she can think about?
We're lucky enough to be in warm and welcoming Vienna
and he's a genius!
We often have lessons together
I should also mention Franz Clement.
REI IKUSHIMA!
YOU'RE NEXT.
heart
heart
heart
So good!
He seems like kind of an eccentric.
adieu!
GUYS HERE ARE REALLY BIG
OR MAYBE I'M JUST A SHRIMP
He keeps himself apart from the rest of our class.
(I found out later that he's in my same year.)
He's just amazing! Beyond talented!
Bam!
He's 15.
(He's 5'7")

HE'S GOT IT BAD
THIS IS GREAT
Hmm hmm.
Ooh! Give me the next one!
But who cares.
Eccentric or not his music is amazing!

CAFÉ HEINJE
The owner bought a piano and put it in the cafe.
There's a little cafe kitty-corner from the boarding house.
whistle

HUH? ME?
The other day, it was Johnny...
YOU'RE SO COOL JOHNNY!

He often grabs students from the Academy and has them play.
NOOO!

I BET HE'LL PICK LISZT
PLAY ONE YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT
The Viennese Waltz?
I suppose he was just thinking of others, like always.
but performing the Vienna Waltz here...
that takes guts.
KNOCK IT OFF!
THIS JUST MAKES YOU LOOK RIDICULOUS
HMPH! YANKS SHOULD STICK TO STRAUSS
LISTEN ROY! YOU OUGHTTA JUST PLAY JAZZ!

WHAT'S WITH THAT GUY?
THAT WAS MEAN!
OH DEAR THAT POOR KID
Johnny!!
Don't stop!
Johnny! Please don't stop...
CYCLOID NOISE
Should only Viennese play the Viennese Waltz?
Is that really true?
So when I play Mozart...?
So only French people can play Debussy...
and only Germans Beethoven?

Are my words a lie...?

cheer me
わおーっ
CAFE
REI!
BRAVO!
shake
shake
ゆさ
ゆさ
Eek!
IKU-SHIMA REI!
THAT MOZART WAS WONDERFUL!
Good-bye!

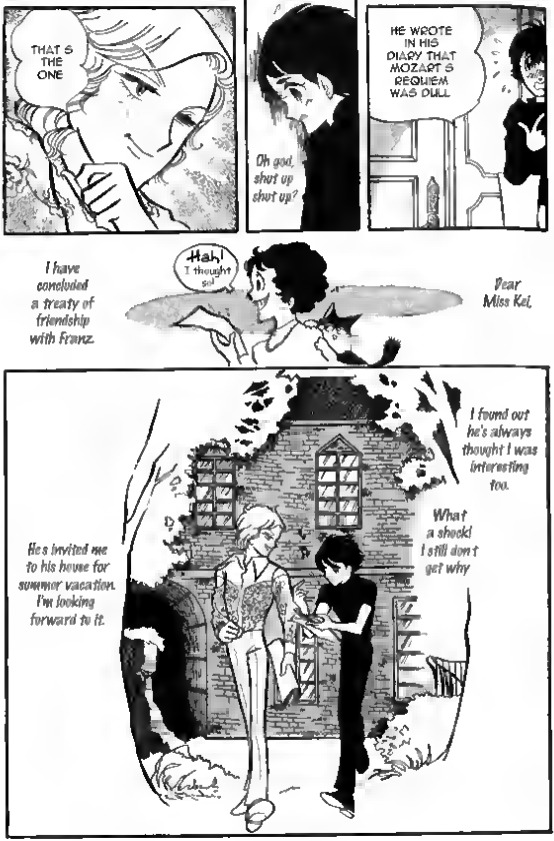
thump
ドン
cheers
カーッ
Music
I'm not good with words...
... but I was able to communicate my feelings all the same!
Miss Kei, you understand, right?
Until that day I had never been grateful to have studied music.
I was so happy!
Everyone understood my Mozart!
And they liked it!

YOU REALLY ARE GOOD AT THAT MOZART SONATA
YEAH I HAVE A PRIVATE LESSON TOMORROW
Hey, Rei!
ARE YOU GOING TO THE PRACTICE ROOMS?

That afternoon, in the usual practice room..
click
It's not that I need the practice really

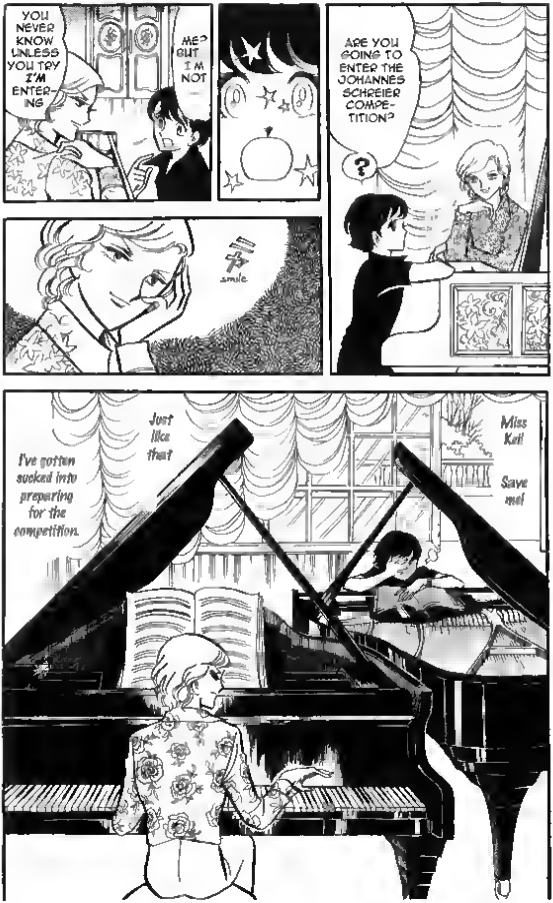
OH!

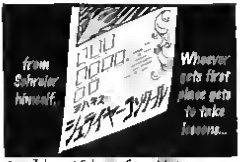
BAM!
clatter
I'LL GO
I SHOULD HAVE KNOCKED!
I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS ANYONE HERE
STENDHAL...
UH... WHA---?
UH...
UM... UM...
GUT... STENDHAL...
"The English version"
Mozart
Stendhal's "The Life of Mozart"
HE HAD A VERY PARTICULAR VIEW OF MOZART. I THINK IT MIGHT INTEREST YOU


THAT'S THE ONE
Oh god, shut up shut up!
HE WROTE IN HIS DIARY THAT MOZART'S REQUIEM WAS DULL
Dear Miss Kei,
Hah! I thought so!
I have concluded a treaty of friendship with Franz.
I found out he's always thought I was interesting too.
What a shock! I still don't get why
He's invited me to his house for summer vacation. I'm looking forward to it.

HE'S AN ARISTO-CRAT! HE'S GOT THAT "VON" IN HIS NAME
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU KNOW HE'S NOT JUST AN ORDINARY GUY, RIGHT?
YOU GOT AN INVI-TATION FROM FRANZ?
It was the first time I'd heard his full name.
Wow it sounds so different...
Franz von Clementi
AFTER ALL WHAT'S IN A NAME?
HA HA! THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU AT ALL.
...but!
but... but...

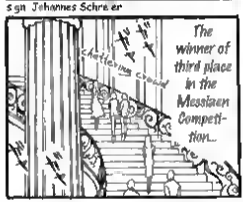
HMM. WELL DO YOU KNOW WHY PEOPLE ARE SO MOVED BY YOUR PLAYING?
WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY FIND INTERESTING ABOUT ME?
SOME-ONE LIKE YOU REI...
IT NEEDS NEW BLOOD!
EURO-PEAN MUSIC IS STAG-NAT-ING
REI! KNOCK KNOCK!
SOME-THING IMPOR-TANT...?
EARTH TO REI!
I'VE GOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO ASK YOU!


YOU NEVER KNOW UNLESS YOU TRY I'M ENTERING
ME? BUT I'M NOT
ARE YOU GOING TO ENTER THE JOHANNES SCHREIER COMPETITION?
?
smile
I've gotten sucked into preparing for the competition.
Just like that
Miss Kat!
Save me!



sign Johannes Schreier Competition

sign Johannes Schreier



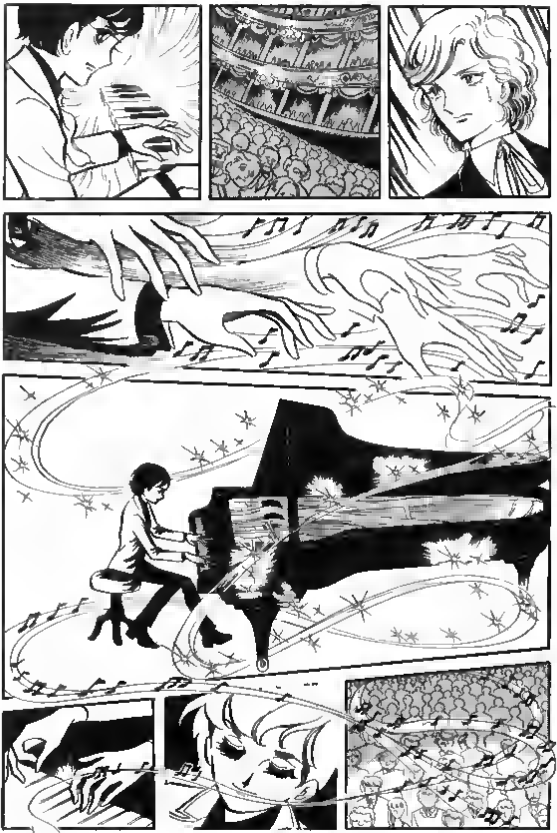
sign Johannes Schreier Co

REI! ARE YOU TAKING IT TOO?
With the amount of practicing I've done, I'll be lucky to make it past the first.
Fifteen people are selected from the first round and three from the second.
NO DOUBT YOU SEE ME AS A RIVAL
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME YOU WERE GOING TO
YOU TOO, HUH?
IT'S ALMOST YOUR TURN!
THERE'S NO TIME, REI!
But she was eliminated in the first round.
I couldn't just leave her
GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU'RE LAUGHING AT ME!
I WON'T LOSE
NOT AT ALL. I'M ONLY HERE BECAUSE FRANZ
How stupid...

I THOUGHT OF NOTHING BUT THE COMPETITION I RARELY SLEPT BECAUSE OF ALL MY LESSONS.
I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING-- NOT EVEN READ A SINGLE BOOK
FINE! GO AHEAD AND LAUGH.
AND THEN YOU... YOU JUST WALTZ IN AND... HOW COULD I LOSE TO YOU!
thump
STOP IT!
THERE'S MORE TO MUSIC THAN LESSONS!
TO BE KNOCKED OUT IN THE FIRST ROUND AND AFTER ALL THAT STU-DYING!
Sound
RE! IS PROOF OF THAT

PLEASE! PLEASE! STOP!
MUSIC IS AS NATURAL TO HIM AS BREATHING
HE HAS TRUE TALENT FLOWING THROUGH HIS VEINS
FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, HE WAS ALWAYS A CUT ABOVE
TRUE TALENT WILL ALWAYS BEAT LOGIC AND POLISH!
Rei!?
Why does she play music if she feels like that?
Why?

It was me against Franz and one other person.
Before I realized it I had passed the second round.
I went last



I was afraid that,
my playing was just the opposite.
though the piece was truly overwhelming.
clap
clap
clap

cheering
Bravo
YOU DID IT, REI! DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS?
THAT'S JOHANNES SCHREIER!
FIRST PLACE GOES TO...
REI IKUSHIMA!!

MR. SCHREIER...
YOU MUST KEEP GOING!
YOU SHOULD BELIEVE IN YOURSELF YOU'RE PERFECT
I ended up studying all summer...
with Franz who came in second
I'M GOING TO TAKE SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT MUSIC REALLY MEANS TO ME
At the end of the summer she left the Academy
I'LL TRY AGAIN. I'M STARTING ALL OVER.
AT THE CONSER-VATOIRE DE PARIS*

* Conservatoire : a Parisian music school

but Franz told them those minor ones were beneath me and put a stop to it
I don't know what I'd do without him here to protect me.
People kept talking about concerts.
They lent me a Bosendorfer grand...
and had put me in a bigger room.
By the time I got home, the boarding-house was in an uproar!
I'd won, and...
that changed every thing.
Quiet Excitement
For the first time in the little under a year that I've been here...
I can see my path clearly before me.
My mind's a blur
I think I'm still in shock.
Finally having achieved the debut recital he'd dreamed of.
And so he had set out on his path.
Eeee!
It's Franz! It's Franz!
So cool!
kiss kiss kiss kiss
Gokuko!

GAAAH!
"Congratulations on your recital, *My* little Rei!"
WAH!
What? I'm like with glasses!
Rei certainly is amazing. Maybe even the next Seiji Ozawa

You didn't show off or get too excited, just stayed earnestly devoted to the music. And now you're quietly following your own path wherever it takes you.

It's been two years since you left Japan. But in those two years, you've been a remarkable success. I'm so happy for you.

I suppose it's that quiet honesty that led to this success.

No matter how far you go, don't ever stop being yourself, Rei. That's what I hope for more than anything.

In May, I'm taking a trip to Europe. I hope to see you in Vienna. I'm really looking forward to it.

-Rei

REY·IKUSHIMA
On the back of the newspaper clipping about his success...
... in his dear friend Franz Clementi's flowing German hand.
... there was a message in emerald ink...
When your piece was over

I wonder if you felt dejected looking out over the silent auditorium
Then all of a sudden
it was gone
I'll never forget the expression on your face

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